

WITNESS MAGAZINE



VOLUME 85

NUMBER 4

APRIL 2002

WOMEN CONFRONTING VIOLENCE

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Philadelphia shelter

© Harvey Finkle

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The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, publisher of *The Witness* magazine and related web site projects, seeks to give voice to a liberation Gospel of peace and justice and to promote the concrete activism that flows from such a Christianity. Founded in 1917 by Irving Peake Johnson, an Episcopal Church bishop, *The Witness* claims a special mission to Episcopalians and other Anglicans worldwide, while affirming strong partnership with progressives of other faith traditions.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

VOLUME 85

NUMBER 4

APRIL 2002

The Witness

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Subscriptions: \$35 per year, \$5 per copy.

Foreign subscriptions add \$20 per year.

Change of address: Third Class mail does not forward. Provide your new mailing address to *The Witness*.

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Resisting a culture of punishment

Please reinstate me. I sent in a previous invoice [in response to your recent direct-mail solicitation] marked "cancel," and then I received the Jan/Feb 2002 issue. ... WOW!

Rebecca Jackson

Chicago, IL

Puritanical mind-set misguided

Ethan Flad's interview of Van Jones ("Addiction to punishment: Challenging America's incarceration industry") cut right to the chase with respect to the underlying motivation for America's peculiar obsession with punishment, especially as it relates to the "puritanical" nature of our culture and its permeation in many mainstream churches today.

Keep in mind, there are people who are still alive today who were alive when alcohol prohibition was passed and later repealed.

As well-meaning as these prohibitionists may have been (including today's prohibitionists who are fueling the war on drugs) in their zeal to protect individuals from vice and punish "sinful" behavior, this mentality is horribly misguided and has produced tragic consequences.

Yes, some people need to be in prison to protect the property and welfare of other innocent members of the public. The European Union has a population of some 351 million inhabitants and a prison population of around 356,000. In contrast, the United States with 274 million residents has a prison population of over 2 million, roughly 400,000 of which are in prison for drug crimes — most of whom are people of color and come from impoverished backgrounds.

I am not terribly optimistic for any dramatic reversal of this puritanical phenomenon in the near future, given the current administration in Washington and the fact that this mentality has been alive in America since the Salem witch trials.

For those Christians who are not addicted to the culture of punishment, especially as it relates to the drug war, Western Europe offers some solid moral and intellectual fod-

der for discussion and debate.

In Holland, which is a peaceful, orderly society, all drugs, including marijuana, are "illegal," but nonetheless any adult can buy marijuana and other drugs in "coffee houses" and the like. This is because the authorities only enforce the law if the drug user engages in criminal or anti-social behavior that directly affects other members of the public.

Thank you, Mr. Flad, and *The Witness* magazine, for your insight into the "war on drugs" and the destructive results it has produced.

Tim Beck

Detroit, MI

'Let My People Go'

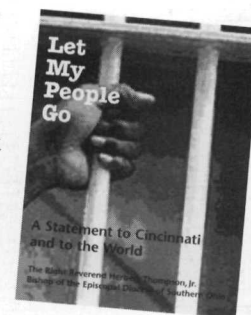
I read with great interest Marianne Arbogast's interview with Bishop Herbert Thompson — "Let My People Go" — in the Jan/Feb 2002 issue of *The Witness*.

Your readers might want to know that a copy of Bishop Thompson's paper is available from Forward Movement Publications, an agency of the national Episcopal Church. I've enclosed a copy of our publication for your perusal. (For copies contact FMP at: 412 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202-4195; 513-721-6659; <www.forwardmovement.org>.)

Charles F. Brumbaugh

Forward Movement Publications

Cincinnati, OH



Embracing religious pluralism

Your regular subscription form asks, "How did you hear about us?" I heard about you many years ago from Miss Nellie McKim. Miss Nellie was the daughter of Bishop John Cole McKim an early Missionary Bishop of Japan. Miss Nellie, I think, was my mother's godmother and a godmother to my son Peter also. She was a missionary in Japan at the start of World War II and was imprisoned there for a time. During that time she was an

Confronting the cross

by Julie A. Wortman

As we prepared this issue on “women challenging violence,” I found myself thinking back to a letter to the editor from Mary Eldridge of Milford, Mich., that we ran in the April 2000 *Witness*. She was responding to an issue on “Recovering from human evil.” Eldridge said she was sorry that our treatment of the topic included nothing about the abuse of children, especially their sexual abuse.

“I’m trying to understand why good people fail to struggle with, talk about, cry over, preach about the abuse of children,” she wrote. “I can think of no greater betrayal among human beings than a parent assaulting their own child. If it’s too much for most people to comprehend, imagine what it is for the child and the child grown to adulthood, who sees nothing around her — be it church, state, family or friends — that challenges the monster that nearly destroyed her (and at times still threatens to destroy). Silence was — and is — evil’s weapon of choice. I’m sorry *The Witness* contained more of that silence.”

The evil of which Eldridge speaks is very much a part of the climate of violence the women in this issue are challenging. Her own personal experience of childhood sexual abuse, in fact, is at the heart of what has led feminist theologian Rebecca Ann Parker to question atonement theologies. The book she wrote with Rita Nakashima Brock, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (Beacon Press, 2001), provides disturbing insight into why otherwise good Christians, at least, keep silent when confronted with the stark reality of the violence and sexual abuse that all too often permeates the daily lives of the women and children who are our neighbors and family members (see Mary Hunt’s interview with Parker and Brock on page 12). Even *Witness* readers will likely find themselves discon-

certed by these authors’ rethinking of the central focus of Christian worship and theology: the cross.

“You couldn’t look at Jesus on the cross and see there, as the old liturgy said, ‘one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,’” Parker recalls in *Proverbs of Ashes*. “You couldn’t see the face of love. You couldn’t see a model for an interior psychological process of dying and rising. You couldn’t see pain inflicted by God for the spiritual edification of believers. All these ways of seeing Jesus on the cross ended up sanctifying violence against women and children, valorizing suffering and pain, or denying loss. You couldn’t look on the man of sorrows and give thanks to God without ending up a partner in a thousand crimes.”

The focus of our “Recovering from human evil” issue (12/99) was from the outset on the traumas of war. But Eldridge was right to question the limitation in light of the issue’s title. Maybe it is true that we all too regularly think of the world’s evil as solely external to our intimate lives, as beyond the walls of the sanctuary. We are scandalized by revelations that contradict this mind-set. It is one thing to imagine and urge social and political reform, another to contemplate and embrace the earth-shattering implications of personal and theological truth-telling, the kind of truth-telling that might require radical reformation.

The silence needs breaking. And that is precisely what the women of faith featured in this issue are committed to doing. To all the Mary Eldridge’s out there, we here at *The Witness* commit to doing our part. Keep the letters coming. ●

Julie A. Wortman is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Our thanks to the Episcopal Church’s Executive Council Committee on the Status of Women for their help in planning this issue.

intermediary to the prison camp commandant, as she was fluent in Japanese. She was repatriated in an exchange of diplomats and eventually lived out her life in San Francisco, Calif. Miss Nellie, good missionary that she was, told me that I should subscribe to your magazine, as I would find it helpful. I never did as I found other channels for my energy.

Last year I met Ethan Flad at my son Andy’s birthday party. I shocked Ethan by knowing of *The Witness*. We met again at Andy’s Christmas party this year and Ethan kindly presented me with copies of the November 2001 and December 2001 issues.

The December 2001 issue [Embracing religious pluralism] convinced me that I should subscribe. It is good to see a call for a reevaluation of this country’s foreign policy in a “religious” magazine. The message coincides with the statements of Michael Nagler of the University of California at Berkeley’s Peace and Conflict Studies Program that I read on the same day that I read the December 2001 issue of *The Witness*.

Thank you for your work.
Donald T. Nakahata, D.D.S.
Mill Valley, CA

Prayer for the New Year

I have been a subscriber for about five years. I am a Christian Scientist and I wish my church had a publication like *The Witness*. I have appreciated every one of the issues I have received over the years. I enclose a prayer for the New Year:

Give us the kindness to hear with compassion,
to offer support, loving comfort, and care.

Give us the courage to do what is needed,
the wisdom to choose what is right and
most fair.

Give us the vision to see what is possible.

Give us the faith that will help pave the way
for a present that’s hopeful,
a future that’s peaceful —

Give us the heart to bring joy to each day.

Suzanne Nightingale
Cape Coral, FL ●

Hadeel's Song

by Hanan Ashrawi

Some words are hard to pronounce —
He-li-cop-ter is most vexing
(A-pa-che or Co-bra is impossible)
But how it can stand still in the sky
I cannot understand —
What holds it up
What bears its weight
(Not clouds, I know)
It sends a flashing light-so-smooth —
It makes a deafening sound
The house shakes
(There are holes in the wall by my bed)
Flash-boom-light-sound —
And I have a hard time sleeping
(I felt ashamed when I wet my bed,
but no one scolded me.)

Plane — a word much easier to say —
It flies, tayyara,
My mother told me
A word must have a meaning
A name must have a meaning
Like mine,
(Hadeel, the cooing of the dove.)
Tanks, though, make a different sound
They shudder when they shoot
Dabbabeh is a heavy word
As heavy as its meaning.

Hadeel-the-dove — she coos
Tayyara — she flies
Dabbabeh — she crawls
My Mother — she cries
And cries and cries
My-Brother-Rami — he lies
DEAD
And lies and lies, his eyes
Closed.

Hit by a bullet in the head
(bullet is female lead — raisa — she kills,
my pencil is male lead — rasas — he writes)
What's the difference between a shell and a bullet?
(What's five hundred-milli-meter —
Or eight-hundred-milli-meter-shell?)
Numbers are more vexing than words —
I count to ten, then ten-and-one, ten-and-two
But what happens after ten-and-ten,
How should I know?
Rami, my brother, was one
Of hundreds killed —

They say thousands are hurt,
But which is more
A hundred or a thousand
(miyyeh or alf)
I cannot tell —
So big — so large — so huge —
Too many, too much.
Palestine — Falasteen — I'm used to,
It's not so hard to say,
It means we're here — to stay —
Even though the place is hard
On kids and mothers too
For soldiers shoot
And airplanes shell
And tanks boom
And tear gas makes you cry
(Though I don't think it's tear gas that makes
my mother cry.)
I'd better go and hug her
Sit in her lap a while
Touch her face (my fingers wet)
Look in her eyes
Until I see myself again
A girl within her mother's sight.

If words have meaning, Mama,
What is Is-ra-el?
What does a word mean
If it is mixed
with another —
If all soldiers, tanks, planes and guns are
Is-ra-el-i
What are they doing here
In a place I know
In a word I know — (Palestine)
In a life that I no longer know?

Hanan Ashrawi is the Commissioner of Information and Public Policy for the League of Arab States and the Secretary General of Miftah, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy. She is also a member of the Palestinian legislative council. Her poem is printed here with permission from Cornerstone, which published the poem in Autumn 2001 (Issue 22). Cornerstone is published by the Jerusalem-based Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (www.sabeel.org).

' CHURCH LEADERSHIP

— a Latina activist speaks out

by Marianne Arbogast

When she worked at a domestic violence shelter in the 1980s, Pat Castillo saw how religious values could be distorted to coerce women into tolerating abuse.

"The women would quote the scriptures that were used against them — they should turn the other cheek, they should submit, they should forgive," she says.

In her current position as coordinator of the PEACE initiative (Putting an End to Abuse through Community Efforts) in San Antonio, Tex., Castillo helped organize a "dialogue of theologians," hoping to counteract that message.

"We had an event at the local public TV station, and invited 12 clergy members to come and do a theological reflection on the scriptures that were most often raised by the survivors in these situations," she recalls. "They represented a wide array of churches in our community. And they made comments like, 'Are we talking about a little slap now and then, or are we talking about a really bad beating?' One guy said, 'Well, was that person keeping the house clean?' A roomful of people got up and said things like that."

The experience was eye-opening, Castillo says, in revealing the complicity of the churches, along with other societal institutions, in violence against women.

Although she has seen some positive changes in recent years — she notes the hearings on domestic violence held by the Committee on the Status of Women in the Episcopal Church, and the participation of local Roman Catholic seminarians as PEACE interns — she believes that "the church could play a much more active role as a teacher with regard to this issue. Church leadership has to be bold, to challenge church members to look at this issue, to talk about it, to address the suffering and to do what they can to change it."

"I realize that it challenges the *status quo* and it challenges the power structure," Castillo says. "It calls for a respect of the genders as equals. Here we are in 2002 and I think there are lots of people who aren't ready for that."

Building a PEACE coalition

Castillo's own work with the PEACE initiative — under the auspices of a Benedictine women's community in San Antonio — seems a hopeful example of the role the church could play. Since 1990, she has worked to build a coalition of community agencies and individuals concerned with domestic violence. The coalition, which now numbers 52 members, meets monthly as a body, and more frequently in subgroups, to develop community projects.

"We do community education, community awareness programming and public speaking," Castillo says. "We organize marches and rallies, we work with the media, we work with the arts community, we work with the gay and lesbian community. We have a little subgroup that we collaborate with that deals with violence between intimates who are older."

When the coalition began, participants felt that the first problem they needed to address was the poor response of the police department to domestic violence complaints.

"There was just incredible inaction in terms of intervention, in terms of resourcing victims, in terms of accountability for perpetrators, in terms of knowledge of the laws. The department was very stagnant and stuck in that old attitude of 'our hands are tied, there's nothing we can do, if those women don't want to press charges, don't come crying to us.'"

Through public meetings, media work and lobbying the city government, the coalition was able to bring about an overhaul in the police department's approach. Today the department funds a victims' services unit geared to the needs of women who have suffered abuse.

87 calls every 24 hours

Castillo is equally proud of the FACT (Family Assistance Crisis Teams) program, which has trained some 1500 community volunteers to work with domestic violence victims.

"They work at the police substations on Friday and Saturday

HAS TO BE BOLD'

tion of women in the media, she says.

"The sexism of viewing women as being around to serve men is an attitude that still permeates our society. Pornography is everywhere. I had an opportunity one time to do a class with little bitty kids, kindergartners and first-graders. I started talking to them about violence in the family and those kids started talking to me about incest, about rape, about women who dance naked with poles, about men who beat up women — just about every horrible thing you can think of that no child should know about. I just kept thinking, who is supervising these children? They're thrown in a room and told to watch TV, with no adult to start having critical analysis conversations with about what they're seeing. I walked out of that school in tears, thinking to myself, where are we as parents, as mentors, as people to be looked up to?"

'Do we want to keep sacrificing Latino men to the criminal justice system?'

Castillo, who serves on the board of the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence, says that that group is doing work that she hopes to translate into projects addressing the situation of young men in her own community who demonstrate abusive behavior.

"Ultimately, what happens to the Latino male when they end up in the criminal justice system is they get eaten alive by the system. So our challenge is, do we want to keep sacrificing our young males to the criminal justice system? We need to stop and think about what this behavior is doing to them. Not with the notion that they need to be given breaks and they need to be tolerated no matter what — absolutely not. But to be willing to examine what it means to deal with issues of racism and poverty and classism and colonialism that are so oppressive and so devastating. And also to recognize the fact that many survivors are going to continue living with these perpetrators. We talk about this stuff in our board meetings — the perpetrators drop off the women at the support groups. And we don't want to bust up families and have all these kids in foster care, because that sure doesn't work. So what are we going to do to help people stay together in ways that are not destructive?"

Part of the answer may lie in reclaiming lost or distorted cultural traditions, she believes.

"When you think of the word 'macho' you think of all these negative things, right? In our culture, in Mexico, if you were a macho you were a man of your word, a man who was respected by your wife and children, a man who dealt with his obligations, a responsible man, a spiritual man. The definition of that word got completely distorted. Not all of our traditions are good and healthy, but some of them were good, some of them gave us rootedness and self-knowledge about who we are, and our connection to our spirituality and our earth. Those are the kinds of things that we're talking about, and we're looking at how we are going to begin translating that in work with males, getting men to be appropriate role models, instead of the drunken, partying, womanizing, sexually promiscuous guy that boys are looking up to."



chological pain, or that they have certain needs — like dogs are pack animals.

If you're counseling a child, asking questions about animals should be another part of the assessment, to see if there's any animal abuse in the house, and if the child is involved in any way. *If you know that a child is abusing an animal, that should alert the clinician that there might be other forms of family violence going on.* Also, it's important because sometimes animals are used to coerce children. With sexual abuse of children, if they have a favorite pet, the animal may be either injured or threatened to gain their silence. Then, treating children would probably be similar, it would be a question of empathy and accountability and education.

In working with children there is also animal-assisted therapy. There's a woman named Susan Krinsk whose therapy partner is a 160-pound bull mastiff named Taz, and he is very important to the treatment. She works at the Child Protection Center in Sarasota, Florida. There was one little boy of 9 who was referred to the center by his school for being sexually aggressive. When he first came to the center he was seeing another psychologist, but he wouldn't talk — he crawled inside a toybox and literally disappeared. Susan was called in, and she walked in with Taz and said, "I hope there's no one in here who's afraid of really big dogs, and I hope there's no one in here who minds being sniffed and licked." He popped out of his hiding place, his eyes big, and asked if he could play with her dog. She said, "Yes, but you came here because you have some problems, and we have to talk about these problems — but Taz is a really good listener. And I can interpret and tell you what Taz thinks." So he said, okay, I'll do it. As it turned out the boy did have a lot of problems — he had actually killed his own cat, as well as harmed other animals in his neighborhood. But in the course of therapy he was able, first of all, to learn about boundaries. He always wanted to play with Taz or climb on him, and sometimes Taz didn't want to. So he learned that another creature also had needs and interests that he had to consider. He also had the pure enjoyment and nurturing of physical contact with Taz and Taz's acceptance of it.

M.A.: I understand that you've been working with a campaign to make extreme animal abuse a felony.

M.L.R.: We were successful in Maryland, and this past May it was signed into law by the governor that extreme acts of animal cruelty — which would be severely beating, torturing, killing or mutilating an animal — would be a felony offense. Maryland was the 32nd state to add a felony provision to the animal cruelty statutes, and there will be campaigns until there are 50 states. People are recognizing that there is a link between animal abuse and human cruelty, and that severe acts of animal cruelty are a crime of violence, and that crimes of violence need to be taken seriously and attended to.

M.A.: How do you respond to that criticism that animal suffering is way down on the list of priorities that we ought to be dealing with?

M.L.R.: I think that any social justice philosophy that pits one suffering group against another is questionable. Our lives are inextricably linked. It's not a choice between them or us. I remember people being concerned that if we worried about feminism, it would take away from the civil rights movement. But it's not either-or, it's both-and. I also think the argument that you have to wait until all the human issues are solved can be a way of blocking out information.

M.A.: Why do you think it is that, even though many people experience positive relationships with animals, we're generally taught to discount them? We're taught that it's our relationships with human beings that really matter, while human-animal relationships are trivialized or seen as insignificant.

M.L.R.: It's human narcissism, I guess. Why is it that people think their race is superior to another, or their gender, or their nationality, or their religion? In some ways it's the same kind of thinking, dismissing the Other as being less-than. Certainly the species barrier is wide and deep. You can trace it historically to lots of different philosophies and it's embedded in our thinking. But I think it's a very pernicious philosophy. Once you cross the species barrier, because it's such a wide one, I think it's easier to see the damage that can be done by viewing other groups as "less-than" or "other-than." So you're more inclined not to make distinctions between yourself and other races or nationalities — whatever the group distinction is — and to see how we share more than we differ.

M.A.: In your own experience, is that true of people who are committed to animal rights? Do you find them to have more of an openness to human beings who are different from themselves?

M.L.R.: Definitely, that's my own experience. There has been some research on this published in *Society and Animals*, which is a journal of Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Researchers gave different attitude scales to animal rights



One block at a time

The PEACE initiative recently received a \$192,000 grant to work on a project called "One Block at a Time."

"It's a model that has been talked about in some of the national programs," Castillo says. "How can we work on this issue by way of neighborhood associations, community activist organizations, committees in churches, youth groups, all of those programs that are out

©Bonnie Anderson

there? Neighborhood people are raising the issue of family violence and how it's affecting their neighborhoods and their crime rates, so what can we do to address this issue? To give an example, the Cellulars on Patrol program — they're neighborhood people who take turns driving around with a cell phone. Wouldn't it be cool if those neighborhood watch people knew of every single protective order that was issued in their neighborhood? And they knew they would have to keep a special watch on those addresses, and they reached out to those survivors and let them know, hey, if you need us we're here. And to look at it not as if there's something for you to be ashamed of, but the fact that you have a protective order is just as significant as if you had just been broken into by burglars."

Castillo would like people "to feel as comfortable talking about the family violence in our neighborhood as they do about the leash law or bad sidewalks or potholes, and to come up with the ideas that they feel will work for them."

Castillo, who is 44, has been doing domestic violence work ever since she visited a battered womens' shelter as a 20-year-old social work intern.

"I couldn't even believe that a place like that had to exist," she says. "I met some very incredible women in that place and have just remained in awe of the strength of women, the endurance of women, their capacity to live and love and remain spirited in the face of such horrific violence."

She can identify with the challenges faced by survivors of abuse.

"I'm a survivor of child abuse, I'm a survivor of incest, I'm a survivor of substance abuse," she says. "For many reasons I probably should have been dead, for many reasons I probably should have been in jail."

But she testifies to "many beautiful and powerful blessings" in her life. Raised Roman Catholic, Castillo had left the church, but was drawn to the Episcopal Church after meeting Carmen Guerrero, then vicar of a church in San Antonio. Castillo, who was working with women in jail, invited Guerrero to do some workshops.

"Scripture just came alive in her conversations with the women, in a way that the women were totally open to and connected with," she says. "There were problems, because we could only get 60 women in at one time, and everybody knew about her and how she spoke to them in her classes. They were beating the door down to come to her sessions, and we had to figure out ways to get people to take their turn. And I was no different."

Castillo says she is proud of the work the Episcopal Church has done to address issues of violence against women.

"I was very privileged to have worked with the Committee on the Status of Women in the Episcopal Church, to raise these issues up and to challenge our church structures to deal with it," she says. "The work has to continue, because we've got a long way to go." ●

Marianne Arbogast is Associate Editor of The Witness. She co-manages a Catholic Worker soup kitchen in Detroit.

activists compared to other groups of people. What they found was that people who were more sympathetic to animal rights and animal welfare were, first of all, more likely women. They also were more likely to endorse all the different progressive causes — gay and lesbian rights, civil rights, world hunger issues.

The other thing that I've noticed, the few times I've been at a table in front of a grocery store trying to get people to become aware of something like testing on the Bion monkeys — which were monkeys that were used in space, and really barbaric things were done to them — when people walked by, it was the less affluent African Americans who were much more likely to stop and look at the material and be sympathetic. People have noticed this about circus leafletting, too. I think it's the same with women, because if you're a member of a group that gets the short end of the stick, you can identify with the suffering.

M.A.: That certainly isn't the picture that comes across in the media. So often, people who are advocating for animals are portrayed as kooks. Why do you think that is?

M.L.R.: Because with the animal rights community, our constituents are billions of animals with absolutely no money or any influence in society, and we are opposing the economic forces of the meat and dairy industry, the biomedical industry and other economic powerhouses. There are huge economic forces opposed to animal rights, and they have a lot of access to the media.

Also, because animals are interwoven in our lives in so many ways, people understand that by opening to the animal rights argument, they're going to be moved to make changes in their daily lives, and I think that's threatening. So it's easy to develop defenses where you can just dismiss the people, dismiss the argument, go along your merry way and not really think about it.

There are many really respectable people who support animal rights. Carl Sagan was an animal rights person. Jane Goodall is an animal rights person — she attends animal rights conferences and she's against biomedical research. Steve Wise, an attorney at Harvard, recently wrote a book called *Rattling the Cage*. Steve is making a case for the legal rights of chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans. He uses legal arguments, philosophical arguments, arguments based on what we know now about biology and ethnology, why there should be legal rights for these kinds of animals, and I'm sure he would extend that further as we advance. His book got a lot of critical acclaim and people like Larry Tribe — a Harvard Law scholar who, if there was a Democratic administration, might have been the next Supreme Court justice — said the only problem with Steve's book is that it didn't go far enough.

The animal rights argument is substantial and it's based on sound reasoning and a lot of evidence. If you're consistent in your ideas about social justice, and if you really study issues and look at all the data, I believe the conclusion is inescapable that our moral consideration has to be extended to animals. ●

WE WEREN'T SAVED



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BY A STATE EXECUTION

— an interview with Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker

by Mary E. Hunt

Feminist theologians and longtime friends Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker are the authors of *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (Beacon Press, 2001). Their book is a theological personal reflection on the claim that Jesus' death saves. Searching for a life-affirming theology leads them each into deep, personal examination of the ways theological ideas affect a person's life — and about how life shapes theology. They've been accused of wanting Christianity without the cross. They deny this charge, although their theology of the cross makes a radical departure from any theology of atonement, even those found in liberation theology.

Rebecca Ann Parker is an ordained United Methodist minister in dual fellowship with the Unitarian-Universalist Association. She is president and professor of theology at Starr King School for the Ministry at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. Rita Nakashima Brock is a research associate at the Harvard Divinity School. She is author of *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*. They are interviewed here by *Witness* contributing editor Mary E. Hunt, co-founder of WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual) in Silver Spring, Md.

MARY HUNT: I want to start off by saying how much I appreciate your book. It's a powerful read and a wonderfully well-written memoir and theological reflection. I read it with some trepidation because I have been critical of similar books in which I felt that I knew too much about the authors and their difficulties. This is a problem of memoir, I think. But here I felt that as a reader I benefited from the very, very hard work that

you had done — both in the writing of the book and also in the therapeutic and other kinds of work that you've done around these issues. How are other people reacting to the book?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: I am grateful for the responses we've gotten. In writing such personal material we did not want to do true confessions — or even to write in a therapeutic way as victims. We wanted to show how life is the basis for theological reflection and to write in a way that would invite people to reflect on their own lives and their own theology. And that's been the response that we've been getting.

One of the most fun reactions that we got was from my fundamentalist sister-in-law who sent us a letter thanking us for the book because it got her all excited about what she thought theologically. And so, in response to us, she was busy reading a bunch of books herself!

REBECCA ANN PARKER: We also got a letter from a friend — someone who'd left Christianity, but was still trying to understand his relationship to it — who was so moved by the book that he read the second half of the book listening at the same time to the Bach St. John's Passion. We so appreciate this reader's creativity in listening to our book and listening to an artist's interpretation of the death of Jesus at the same time. That kind of multi-layered processing is part of what we were hoping to inspire.

MARY HUNT: In the book you explore or model a theologi-

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK
and REBECCA ANN PARKER

PROVERBS OF ASHES

Violence, Redemptive Suffering,
and THE SEARCH FOR WHAT SAVES US



"A searing indictment, personal and experiential, pastoral and theological, of the most unfortunately successful idea in the history of Christian thought."

JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN
author of *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*

cal method of which a lot of people in the theological academy, at least, are very suspicious because they can't put a name to it. They don't understand that human beings function on so many levels at once. You could make a methodological claim that would be very helpful for people who are struggling with these issues in the day-to-day work in pastoral ministry.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Yes. One of the things that happens in pastoral ministry that our book witnesses to is that theological reflection happens at the intersection between life experience and people's experiences of their religious tradition. It's very important to us not to just witness from life — to tell the stories of our lives — but to tell the story of the interaction between our life experience and traditions of Christianity as we've encountered them.

MARY HUNT: How did you weigh the pros and cons of so much self-revelation?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Well, Rebecca and I didn't start out to write a book like this. We started out to write a book of theology, one not just for experts, but for everyone who thinks theologically. We had been using our own stories in third-person form to show that these ideas have an impact on human life and need to be reflected upon in that way. The more we struggled with how to do this, the more we faced into the fact that the stories were our stories and we needed to claim them because they really help people see how we got to the theology. So the point of telling all this personal stuff about our personal lives was to show how the theological conclusions we had reached really were grounded in our own lives and experiences. And we reflected intensely on that experience. Our book doesn't just report raw experience. It's really thought-through experience.

MARY HUNT: Some of the violence that you describe is so horrible that, as a reader, my gut reaction was to want to protect you, both as those little girls and as grown women. The question that came to my mind is how can we help one another in such situations?

REBECCA ANN PARKER: The book offers a non-violent view of salvation that doesn't valorize suffering or violence. The idea that "Jesus died for us" ends up sanctioning violence. The alternative to that theology is to say that, in the presence of violence, part of what saves us are the steady witnesses — the human beings who are willing to face into the realities of violence without mystifying it or denying it. We help one another when we refuse theology that moves us away from showing up, facing violence and stopping it. Steady witnesses are not confused about what stopping violence requires.

MARY HUNT: How conscious do you think the religious justification for violence that you outline was for your perpetrators?

Did they see themselves as the Father God who had permission? Is it that easy?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Well, I think it varies. But this theology has been taught for so long as the Western orthodox tradition that people don't need to make a conscious connection.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: I agree with Rita. I think it varies. Theology seeps into life like groundwater and we drink it in. So it matters a lot what's in the water! But we tell one story of a colleague whose father forced sex on her throughout her childhood and this father explicitly said to the child — to this daughter — that he and God were very close and that God approved of what he was doing. And the daughter heard in church about a God who asked his child to suffer, so when her father said God and I are close and God approves of this, what resource did she have that would give her any leverage against the sort of divinely sanctioned authority of her father to rape her? So in this case the theology was very explicit.

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: I think the thing that most people don't know historically about that whole idea that Jesus died in our place and took on the debt of sin is that it emerged most fully in the Crusades. It paralleled what the pope promised the crusaders if they would go out and commit acts of violence. So whether it's explicitly used that way or not, violence is the subtext of its historical development.

MARY HUNT: If Christianity is to blame in such a primary way, and I have every reason to agree with you, does increasing religious pluralism offer any more safety or do you see strains of this same thinking in other religions?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Well, it's there in a lot of religious traditions because there are very few religious traditions that aren't in cultures where warfare and military activity aren't deeply embedded in the society. You may get different justifications for the use of violence, but the idea that religion can give ideological weight to people who engage in acts of violence isn't just distinctive to Christianity.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: I agree. Christianity isn't unique in having theologies that sanction violence. And Christianity also has different strands of tradition that, if you will, have a different gospel message. Part of what Rita and I have consistently said is that, to be an active religious person, you have to accept responsibility for the heritage in which you stand and you have to actively sort out what of that tradition is life-supporting and life-giving and what of it does things like sanction violence. We have to claim our authority, as religious people, to make judgments about our heritage. And then we must creatively transform our tradition to advance what saves life.

MARY HUNT: It's so clear how U.S. people have been able to

see that in Islam around questions of terrorism — for example, Muslims use competing interpretations of their own texts. And yet very few Christians in this country have been able to grant that same leeway to their own tradition on things like this. I wonder what kind of advice you would have for local pastors or for active lay people who want to look at not only instances of violence, but what I would call a violent culture — whether religiously perpetrated or not. What might we do?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Well, one of the ways that life is saved is by people who become active in their own theological processes. That they don't simply passively receive a tradition and adhere to it, but actually think actively about their own life experiences in light of that tradition. The other thing is that it's also important not to be alone. Violence isolates people and makes them ashamed or guilty. So the other thing is never to do anything in isolation, but to work hard to keep bonds of community going and to keep community alive. We must invest time and energy in making those connections.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Here is one place for people to start: in small covenant groups for theological reflection, where people are able to create an atmosphere of truthful speaking and deep listening to hear the truths of one another's lives and to grapple with them in the context of their heritage. I was interested that one friend of mine, who is a survivor of sexual violence, started to read the book but then said, "I can't read this right now, unless I read it in relationship with some other people or with a therapeutic connection, so that I can discuss the material in the context where I can talk about it." I thought that was a very sensible response.

Another important response is to engage very seriously with what happens in liturgy, hymnody and preaching. The kinds of questions that Rita and I raise about the religious sanctioning of violence in Christian tradition go to the heart of some of our liturgical practices. It matters what we say on Sunday morning in the eucharistic prayer about the violence that happened to Jesus.

MARY HUNT: Or what we sing. Or what we say during the Holy Saturday vigil.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Right. It is important to not accept uncritically the traditions of the church and the liturgies, but to engage in transforming them in a more life-supporting way.

MARY HUNT: I was interested, Rita, in your discussion of your talks with Nelle Morton. Her famous "hearing one another into speech" was based on a woman's experience of violence. It made me think of that very famous Women Counseling Women conference that was held at Union Theological

'I told the congregation we had to stop sleeping by the fire.'

Hadley Basque invited me to lunch. He'd been listening to my sermons [on the crucifixion] and wanted to respond. Hadley was one of the nonbelievers in the congregation. An artist who worked with the homeless in a downtown emergency shelter, Hadley was active in the church but didn't buy into any of the theology. I liked Hadley. I always learned things, talking with him.

"I was a prisoner of war during the Korean War," he began. "I was in the camp for two years. The winters were the hard part. In North Korea the winters are very cold. It snows. The ground freezes. We had to sleep in drafty barracks on thin boards with one thin blanket. In winter, the guards would make charcoal fires in these barracks. They stood around the fires, warming themselves, in front of us. If you wanted to, you could take your blanket and go sleep by the fire. The guards didn't mind."

"You could always tell the prisoners who had given up hope. They would go sleep by the fire. It was warmer there. You could make it through the night without shaking from the cold. But being warmed that way lowered your resistance. The ones who slept by the fire would get sick, pneumonia or flu, or God knows what. They'd last for a while, but they wouldn't make it. They would die."

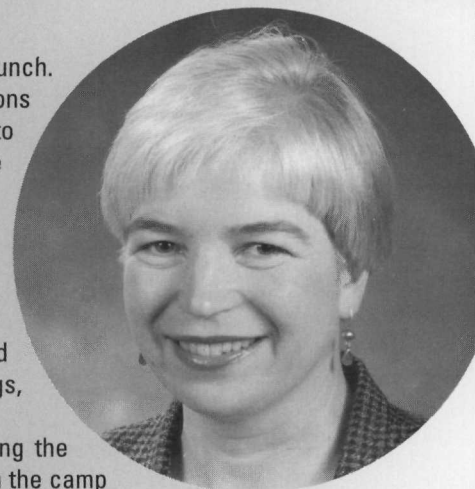
"Those of us who survived — we were the ones who never went to sleep by the fire."

I looked at Hadley across the table. There was quiet. The restaurant noises clattered around us. I knew what it felt like to sleep away from the fire, but I hadn't known, until then, that it might be a way to survive.

I told the congregation we had to stop sleeping by the fire. My objection to every theology of the cross was that it mystified violence and offered dangerously false comfort. The restless concern, the fire in my bones, was to face violence in the world more squarely. Theology cloaked violence and taught people to endure it. Christianity's denial of violence appalled me.

You couldn't look at Jesus on the cross and see there, as the old liturgy said, "one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." You couldn't see the face of love. You couldn't see a model for an interior psychological process of dying and rising. You couldn't see pain inflicted by God for the spiritual edification of believers. All these ways of seeing Jesus on the cross ended up sanctifying violence against women and children, valorizing suffering and pain, or denying loss. You couldn't look on the man of sorrows and give thanks to God without ending up a partner in a thousand crimes.

The actual historical event of Jesus' crucifixion was neither sweet nor



saving. In Jesus' time, the Romans occupied all of Palestine. The Roman empire overtaxed the peasants, confiscated peasants' forfeited land and co-opted the Jerusalem Temple to serve the needs and wants of the ruling minority. The Romans and their collaborators in Jerusalem were unpopular with the peasants of Galilee, who resisted in many ways. Jesus, a Galilean Jewish teacher, resisted Roman exploitation and cultural domination by teaching and healing. A community gathered around him.

The Romans suppressed resistance by terrorizing the local population. Crucifixion was their most brutal form of capital punishment. It took place in full public view, to teach a lesson through terror. Those crucified were soldiers or slaves who had run away from service or enemies of the state, especially those fomenting political insurrection and resistance. Jesus was likely guilty as charged. His demonstration against the Jerusalem Temple would have been interpreted by Pilate, who used the Temple treasury to fund his public works projects, as insurrection. Pontius Pilate was notoriously cruel. Philo, Pilate's contemporary, describes Pilate's "outrages, wanton injuries, constantly repeated executions without trial." Jesus died a violent death, preceded by the torture of flogging, which was meant to score the flesh so deeply that the victim bled to death on the cross, sometimes lingering for days. Often the victim was simply tied to the cross. Jesus was nailed, the worst way to be hung. Seneca wrote: "Can anyone be found who would prefer wasting away in pain dying limb by limb, or by letting out his life drop by drop, rather than expiring once for all? Can any man be willing to be fastened to the accursed tree, long sickly, already deformed, swelling with ugly weals on shoulder and chest, and drawing the breath of life amid long-drawn-out agony? He would have many excuses for dying even before mounting the cross."

Jesus died relatively quickly, which means his wounds were very deep.

His absence was acutely felt. Many of his followers dispersed, anguished and afraid. A few women remained to tend the body and see to his burial. They grieved deeply. Over the years, Rita and I would contemplate the meaning of Jesus' death. To say that Jesus' executioners did what was historically necessary for salvation is to say that state terrorism is a good thing, that torture and murder are the will of God. It is to say that those who loved and missed Jesus, those who did not want him to die, were wrong, that enemies who cared nothing for him were right. We believe there is no ethical way to hold that the Romans did the right thing. We will not say we are grateful or glad that someone was tortured and murdered on our behalf. The dominant traditions of Western Christianity have turned away from the suffering of Jesus and his community, abandoning the man on the cross.

Atonement theology takes an act of state violence and redefines it as intimate violence, a private spiritual transaction between God the Father and God the Son. Atonement theology then says this intimate violence saves life. This redefinition replaces state violence with intimate violence and makes intimate violence holy and salvific. Intimate violence ends sin. Behind the holy mask of intimate violence, state violence disappears.

— Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes*

Seminary in 1973 in New York. Nelle was there. That was where I first experienced a feminist liturgy. It was an exorcism liturgy, an exorcism from rape. Is it safe to say that much of what feminist, womanist, and *mujerista* theology has been about is not simply women's oppression but violence against women?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: One of the questions feminists are grappling with right now is about whether it is appropriate to universalize anything. If we are attuned to histories of cultural imperialism and racism, how can we talk to each other about our own experiences when there's so much particularity and difference and conflict among us? But it seems to me that this issue of violence is one of those issues that cuts across culture and class and all kinds of things. Not that violence is the same everywhere, but that there seem to be certain mechanisms in coping with it that can do worse damage. Judith Herman's book, *Trauma and Recovery*, has been translated into nearly a dozen languages and is being read in cultures like Japan, where you'd least expect to find a Western book on psychotherapy to appear. And yet people are finding her work on the aftermath of violence to be extremely helpful for survivors of intimate and sexual violence and for survivors of torture in war.

MARY HUNT: In 1973 we were talking about the oppression of women, but I now realize that even the word oppression was coded in a way not to say violence. It was oppression against women. But in fact rape is rape and it's not oppression, it's violence!

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Well, in writing this book, Rebecca and I didn't start out using the term violence. It was really through digging into our experience and struggling with the right language that we finally realized that we were not talking here about suffering but about violence. Once we realized that, a lot of other pieces fell into place.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: This is an important point, because for all the years that Rita and I and you, too, Mary, have been engaged in working for the freedom of women and women's rights and for as long as we've worked on these theological issues of Christianity sanctioning violence, it was a long, slow process before we came to the simple clarity: We're not talking about suffering, we're talking about violence. Theologies of the cross often lump into the word "suffering" all human pain, some of which is not violence, but is just part of life — the suffering of disease, the suffering of the loss of ones we love who have died naturally. But this suffering is not identical to those experiences in which there are intentional acts by

human beings that cause other human beings harm. The death of Jesus was a violent event. It was an event of human violence. This is something we have sought to clarify: It is not enough for theology to speak about suffering. Theology must address the problem of violence.

MARY HUNT: A lot of the men in the book were villains. But there were some heroes, too. In fact, there are a lot of men who are going to read this and say, "I didn't abuse my daughter and I haven't done this and I haven't done that." How can we help these men also to see the positive things they can do — such as the listening they need to do to women's experiences — to unleash creativity for justice?

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: There are two aspects: I think that often men don't understand silence in women's behavior or in the behavior of people who are marginalized. It's important not to be satisfied with silence, but also not to coerce speech. In the book, Bernard Loomer, from whom I took a christology doctoral seminar in college, could press in a way that compelled me to answer him. And if I didn't know how to answer him, I felt I could say I didn't know and that wouldn't be belittled.

The other aspect is that, along with the expectation that women be silent, there is a huge cultural phobia about women's anger. Many men, especially, I think, are really frightened of women's anger. So they dodge by being nice guys or they run away and try to evade it. Anger didn't seem to frighten Bernie Loomer or make him uneasy. I wrote an angry paper on feminist theology for his class and he not only gave me an "A," but told me to write my dissertation on the same topic.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: In our book, Rita tells about a gay man named Glen, who intervenes in a healing way during a discussion about rape which explodes into homophobic anger. The goodness of Glen is that he's not afraid of anger and he's able to stay with the process of anger until there's a breaking open of soul that moves the conversation into a new space.

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: What I found interesting about that moment was that Glen was present with the anger that was homophobia projected onto him; he could hear the hurt and pain that was behind the anger. He was not patronizing. Being patronizing is another way not to listen. Glen stood his ground in terms of his own dignity and a demand for respect for his personhood, but in a way that placed a



'Isolating Jesus from mutual relationships carried forward the trauma of violence without healing it.'

Children at school occasionally called me names, like Chink or Jap, and made fun of me by pulling the corners of their eyes up tight. Their taunting made recess time a minefield. Eventually, I figured out who the mean kids were and avoided them, but it was difficult. I grew more homesick for Japan, where I had lived for my first five years. No one there had ever treated me with such cruelty. How does a seven-year-old child defend herself against random and incomprehensible hostilities?

It would be many years before I had an answer. I formed a flesh of bronze to shield myself from arrows of hate. Inside that metallic skin, I could pretend that I did not feel the sting of scorn, the humiliation of contempt, that I was impervious to hate. My pain remained hidden, as undigested lumps frozen in time. I worked to assure I did nothing to provoke ridicule, nothing to embarrass myself. I became disdainful of my own feelings of vulnerability. As long as I faced outward from my shield, I could deny the pain within. If I could scorn my own weaknesses, I could forestall succumbing to my fear, despair and homesickness.

Even now, when hurt, I sometimes retreat behind that shield; it gives me an air of imperturbability. I am emotionally hidden, unavailable to others. I can be indifferent or cruel. I ignore my own pain, resorting first to fury. Anger allows me to blame others, to deflect the pain off the surface of bronze. My capacity for empathy disappears. I survived a childhood being Japanese in Kansas this way, but sometimes I feel as though the fat white girl won.

I realized long after I was a theologian that my interest in religion and my focus on the violence done to Jesus are grounded in my childhood experiences of racism. I have concluded that the Christian theological tradition has interpreted Jesus' life in ways that reinforced trauma. I was isolated by the traumatic events of my childhood. The tradition has isolated Jesus as a singular savior, alone in his private relationship with God. Jesus is depicted as unique and separate, carrying salvation on his own solitary shoulders. His relationships to others are described paternalistically, as if they needed him but he did not need them. To be saved, I was supposed to have an isolated relationship with him, to need him when he did not need me.

I knew, from my own experience, that there is no grace in such isolation. Isolating Jesus from mutual relationships carried forward the trauma of violence without healing it. My theological obsession became how to show that vulnerability, mutuality and openness demonstrate love, that these bonds of love and care reveal the presence of God. If Jesus did not participate in such bonds, if he was isolated, he could not offer any grace.

— Rita Nakashima Brock, *Proverbs of Ashes*

mirror before the person, rather than an accusatory challenge. He wasn't being paternalistic, he wasn't being nice. He challenged with a kind of love that was transformative.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Another one of the good men whose story we tell is Bill, who told me when I was a young minister about his process of recovery from how combat had affected his life. He comes to a transformed understanding of what it is to be a good man. I think it's very important for men who have gone through a transformation process of claiming themselves — claiming their own lives as a site of God's presence — to speak about what they know. One of my male friends says our book has stimulated his thinking about his relationship to his children and about what good fatherhood is. It's so simple in some ways, but I think that men who think about what good parenting is must grapple with the kinds of issues we raise in this book.

MARY HUNT: I was thinking about that, too, around issues of child abuse. I really admired your effort, Rebecca, to figure out the truth with a kind of scrupulous fairness — and I wondered if there was a religious motivation that went into that?

REBECCA ANN PARKER: A lot of things came to mind. I am religiously committed to truthfulness — including emotional truthfulness, which has been a struggle for me. Part of what was so helpful to me was the good fortune of working with a very gifted — and wise — therapist. I was able, in going back and reworking the experience of having been sexually abused as a child, to come to know how I actually felt about what happened. Some of that was very difficult to face because part of what I felt was an incredible compassion for the perpetrator. And the depth of compassion I felt was actually problematic! I had to come to see that compassion can bind one into unhealthy relationships. So I don't think compassion is an unqualified good!

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: One of the most powerful insights from Rebecca's story which I really appreciate is the critique of any attempt to universalize one emotion over another as good and others as bad. Love itself has limits. And compassion has limits. And anger has limits, but they all are there.

MARY HUNT: That leads to my last question: What are you working on? What's the sequel?

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Let me answer the second question first. We are working on the anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John. The anti-Judaism issue is complicated because it is linked to why John's Gospel doesn't present Jesus' death as having what is of saving importance about Jesus. John is an alternative, if troubling, voice right there at the beginning of Christianity. It presents a salvation focused on the presence of God and on the commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you." So we're working on unraveling the complex, troubling way John's

Gospel simultaneously blames Jews for Jesus' death and offers an alternative to atonement theology.

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: The other interesting thing about the Gospel of John is that it doesn't have a eucharist, it doesn't have Jesus saying, "This is my body broken for you."

REBECCA ANN PARKER: No, it has a meal with a foot washing and a speech about love, which is an interesting difference

MARY HUNT: The dinner party Gospel!

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: Yes, exactly, it has a dinner party! And its picture of baptism is very different from the tradition that sees it as a dying and rising in imitation of Christ.

What we call Christianity was a series of social movements that had a lot of different ways of interpreting what his death meant. The tradition has attempted to harmonize into one voice and one theology a series of different books by different authors. It's important to pay attention to the different voices and the different interpretations of what Jesus' death means. In John, he's a sacrifice to Caesar. In Mark, he's a political martyr. Paul's not real consistent about what he thinks the death means except that it's a puzzle to him. So, I think we must be more honest about the ambiguity of even the earliest recorded voices in the tradition and hear them as a multiplicity of theological voices in dialogue with one another.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: For some reason I'm thinking about the story of Peter's denial — it has a double meaning. Jesus says to Peter, you're going to deny me. We always read that as, "You're not going to keep faith with me." But another way Peter — the church — hasn't kept faith with Jesus is by denying violence. It's that denial of violence that makes it more possible for violence in all its forms to continue. If the church can tell the truth about the violence that happened to Jesus, it will be more able to resist and redress violence in the world now.

MARY HUNT: That's right. My view is that people like you and me and others will be seen as apologists in the long run — not as people who tore down a faith tradition, but as people who in a funny sort of way helped to build it up, because they made the foundation much more secure.

REBECCA ANN PARKER: Rita and I and other feminists are often accused of wanting Christianity without the cross — and of not having suffered enough to understand the cross. But we don't want Christianity without the cross. We want Christianity to grapple with the violence that happened to Jesus. Reflection on violence should be at the center of Christian theology. We know it is possible to resist and recover from violence and Christianity also has this saving message.

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK: What saves life isn't death, but resistance to violence through the work of love and justice. ●

Confronting abuse

by Marianne Arbogast

Journal of Religion and Abuse:

Advocacy, Pastoral Care and Prevention

Marie Fortune, editor

The Haworth Pastoral Press

While Martin Luther stressed the solemn responsibility of parenthood, he failed to question the assumption that children were property and took physical punishment for granted. And while he recognized human sexuality as a blessing (albeit a "marred" one) and showed sensitivity to women's experience of rape as violence, he employed startling metaphorical rape imagery to describe Christ's work in the soul. For survivors of sexual and domestic violence, the Lutheran tradition is ambivalent, carrying some themes that can be helpfully emphasized and others that must be rejected.

This is the subject of an article by Mary Pellhauer, a retired Lutheran seminary teacher and child abuse survivor, in *The Journal of Religion and Abuse: Advocacy, Pastoral Care & Prevention* (Vol. 2, No. 2), a quarterly journal addressing issues of abuse from an interreligious, interdisciplinary perspective, published by Haworth Press and edited by Marie Fortune of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Founded by Fortune in 1977 in Seattle, Wash., the Center marks its 25th anniversary this year. From its beginnings as a resource for education, training and pastoral care of survivors of sexual assault and domestic abuse, the Center has grown into an internationally recognized organization addressing a wide range of issues through a multicultural lens — from clergy sexual abuse to child abuse to healthy teen relationships. Staff members have produced an array of books, videos and workshops on these themes, and publish a quarterly

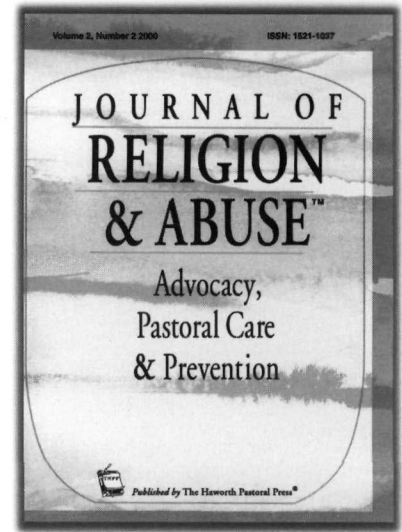
newsletter, *Working Together*, which is available on the Center's website, <www.cpsdv.org>. The *Journal of Religion and Abuse* was launched in 1999.

Despite the *Journal's* academic format, the articles collected in it are, with rare exception, remarkably jargon-free and accessible to a wide range of readers. Many, like Pellhauer's on Luther, examine aspects of religious tradition (primarily Christian, Jewish and Muslim) that bear on issues of abuse — from scriptural interpretation (the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34) to liturgical custom ("giving away" the bride) to pastoral practice (positive and negative models of the Church's work with prostitutes). Some address social and psychological issues that affect particular groups, such as the pangs of disloyalty that Jewish women can feel if they speak out on domestic violence in the Jewish community.

Substantial book reviews are included in each issue of the *Journal*, and some issues contain transcripts of panel conversations — in one issue, a dialogue on "Men and Women Working Together to Stop Violence Against Women" sponsored by a Presbyterian men's organization; in another, a conference presentation on the responses of Muslim and Christian communities to domestic violence.

"There is no question in the overall strategy to end sexual and domestic violence, that our congregations, mosques, stakes, etc., as well as our denominations, movements, and organizations are key to the effort," Marie Fortune wrote in a recent issue of the *Journal*. For anyone pursuing this goal within a religious institution, *The Journal of Religion and Abuse* is an important resource. ●

Marianne Arbogast is The Witness' associate editor.



Too often our religious communities have been roadblocks for victims and survivors. Many women have been abandoned by their communities, shamed with guilt trips while their perpetrators have had a license to continue their abuse. The final consequences of all this has been the destruction of families, of individuals and an erosion of people's trust in their religious institutions. If our religious institutions are going to be of any help in this whole situation, they need to begin with confessing that they have not been helpful up until now. No woman should ever be forced to choose between safety and her faith community. She should be able to access the resources of both, advocacy and shelter as well as a faith-based support or counseling response. These two resources should be working collaboratively to provide consistent advocacy and support for safety and healing for victims or survivors. If a woman is put in the position of having to choose, she will often choose her religious affiliation and community because it is familiar and because it is a high priority in her life. If she finds leadership that does not understand her experience and does not empathize with her experience and proceeds to blame and shame her, she will be further cut off from the resources she desperately needs.

— Marie Fortune, excerpted from "Domestic Violence: The Responses of Christian and Muslim Communities," *Journal of Religion and Abuse*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2001

ADDRESSING A



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The 'work of the people' may be to say 'no, no, no.'

by Diann L. Neu

Many women and men, boys and girls need and yearn for a community of faith to restore their spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health after they have experienced violence. Some of them may want to celebrate a liturgy for healing.

Let me give four examples of people who have come to my colleagues and me for help in planning a healing liturgy.

Sara, a social worker in her mid-40s, requested support and assistance in planning a liturgy to mark publicly her survival of childhood incest.

Suzanne, a nurse in her 50s, spoke out about the sexual abuse she experienced from a former pastor while she was in counseling with him. Members of her community needed to create a liturgy of lament to remember those who have been victimized by church leaders, and to voice the need for effective change in attitudes and church practice.

Gina, a teenager, was raped by a counselor at church summer camp. Her counselors and friends needed to gather for a service of healing.

Francesca was invited to be on her church's team that responds to violence against women. Her community wanted to create a commissioning to bless her and the team.

Liturgy, *liturgia*, "the work of the people," brings to public expression the faith life of the community.

Communities use healing liturgies to restore spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health to members who have been hurt through broken relationships and scarred from sexual harassment, molestation and misconduct or abuse of a sexual nature. They light candles and burn incense, read texts and pray, lay hands on one another and anoint with oils, bathe in salts, bless with water, drink herbal teas, talk and listen and break bread. The liturgies gather and renew the collective energy of a community of people who are engaging in liberation from patriarchy and kyriarchy. They raise up the voices of the abused and make visible the faith of individuals, families and congregations.

"Creating a service of healing is often helpful for the transition from victim into survivor," says S. Amelia Stinson-Wesley, an ordained Methodist minister who is founder of Response: A Religious Response to Violence Against Women and Children in North Carolina. She calls for healing liturgies in her 1996 article, "Daughters of Tamar: Pastoral Care for Survivors of Rape" (in *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, ed. by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, Fortress Press, 1996). But, too often, official liturgical texts fall short of what's needed for this to occur. Marjorie Procter-Smith, an Episcopalian liturgist and author of *Praying with Our Eyes Open: Engendering Feminist Liturgical Prayer* (Abingdon, 1995), shares an experience that many have. "A woman survivor of family violence asked me to help her plan a healing service for herself. ... In turning to conventional models of Christian prayer, I found myself unable to claim anything in this tradition of confession, thanksgiving, and petition that seemed appropriate to the occasion. Certainly there was much to confess in this woman's life, but not on her part ... certainly all of us there could and did give ample thanks for the courageous and creative woman for whom the ritual was held; and petitions for her continued well-being were in all our hearts. But the conventions failed miserably to acknowledge her — and our — anger and outrage. ... What needed to be said to God could not be fitted into the form of traditional Christian prayer."

CRISIS OF PRAYER

Many women survivors of violence, and the women and men who work to end the violence, find themselves in a crisis of prayer. They often feel anger at God and the church. They feel betrayed. They need prayers of refusal: refusal to accept, to yield, and to assent to the terror of things as they are. They need to say “no” in prayer because saying no and being heard is essential to survival.

Some communities create healing services to meet the specific needs of their members for this kind of prayer. I share the following with you so you can imagine the liturgies your community may need to create. But they come with a caution: Make sure the person, family and community is ready for such a liturgy. As Stinson-Wesley notes, “Suggesting a healing service is a delicate matter. Be careful not to insist upon anything or any form. Let the survivor decide whether and when and how any ritualized form of healing will take place. Offer resources such as prayers, litanies, and songs related to the surviving of violence. Help her plan, but do not create the entire service without her contribution.”

Sara's liturgy: Break the silence

Sara's father, her perpetrator, had died within the year. His death was the catalyst for her, as she said, “to give myself the gift of integration and healing.” Her liturgy began with a purification of her home to establish safety. Four women lit four candles to symbolize the collective power, tears, life and support of women. Sara's daughter invited participants to each take an evergreen branch and place them around the house to create a safe space. Each placed oil, an ancient symbol of strength and healing, on one another's foreheads to invoke healing, saying to one another, “Reclaim your healing powers for yourself and for others.”

Sara told her story about the terror and

violence of her incest, named her wounds, read some of her poems, and put her father's knotted handkerchiefs in the center of the room to represent the tears of children, her tears. She then took scissors and cut the knots from the handkerchiefs. The women did the same with the handkerchiefs they used. Some women spontaneously untied the knots. Many wept. Sara proclaimed a litany to which all responded, “Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!”

I release the chronic pain of 45 years.

I release the pain in my jaws, my legs, my head, and my entire body.

I release the pain of disturbed intimate relationships.

I release the need to maintain silence about my incest.

I release the attachment to wanting my father's admission of raping me.

The women blessed Sara's home and work. They wrote notes to her telling her how she is a blessing to them, shared what they had written, and gave her the papers as a keepsake. They sang and danced. To close, they passed the four candles around the circle and committed themselves to breaking the cycle of violence, saying, “My sister, as long as your light burns, violence will be overcome.”

This liturgy broke the silence that surrounds incest. It offered Sara another aspect of healing and invited the community to touch their healing powers.

Suzanne's liturgy: A service of lament

Suzanne spoke out about the sexual abuse she experienced from a former pastor while she was in counseling with him. Members of the community came together angry and hurt that their souls had been stolen from them by God's servant. In their sorrow they created a liturgy of lament to remember those who have been victimized by church leaders and to voice the need for effective change in attitudes and church practice.

They prayed:

LEADER: Who are our enemies in the context of working to stop abuse and violence in the church? Who are hostile and rejecting when we speak out and challenge our churches? Who are not our friends in this matter?

VOICE 1: Those who put stumbling blocks in the way of children. Those who hide crimes and misconduct from lawful and appropriate investigation.

VOICE 2: Those who commit violence against women in the home, at the workplace, in the streets, in cults and those who abuse women and men in pastoral relationship.

VOICE 3: Those who listen to victims' stories with sympathy, yet speak badly of them to others and do more harm by their actions.

VOICE 4: Those who play at being advocates, abandoning victims when their status in the church is at risk, leaving others to pick up the pieces.

VOICE 5: Those who manipulate and obstruct processes of accountability for clergy. Those who exploit the letter of the law and negate its spirit.

VOICE 6: Those who talk of justice, of right relationships with each other and sexuality as a gift from God but who do not discern when their colleagues abuse their professional power.

LEADER: What do we want for our enemies?

VOICES 1-6: That they be held to account.

LEADER: What do we want for ourselves?

VOICES 1-6: Justice, healing and vindication.

LEADER: What does God want for us?

VOICES 1-6: To know the truth, to set the oppressed free, to have life abundantly.

This liturgy, created by Coralie Ling and members of Fitzroy Uniting Church in Melbourne, Australia, broke silence about clergy sexual abuse and acknowledged publicly that it is a church issue.

Gina's liturgy: Be healed

Gina was raped by a counselor at church camp. Her youth minister and friends gathered with her to help her reconstruct her world which had been shattered and will never be the same again. They each took a scarf, tied a knot in it, raised it high over their heads and shouted: "No! No! No!"

LEADER: To counselors who rape and harm,
ALL: No! No! No!

LEADER: To men who harass women and girls walking down the street,
ALL: No! No! No!

LEADER: To fathers, brothers, grandfathers and uncles who sexually abuse girl-children,
ALL: No! No! No!

LEADER: To husbands, lovers and partners who batter and rape their partners,
ALL: No! No! No!

They blessed oil and anointed their friend with it. After asking her permission, they laid hands on her and one close friend offered a healing prayer that included:

LEADER: From violence to your body, be healed.

ALL: Be healed.

LEADER: From violence to your feelings, be healed.

ALL: Be healed.

LEADER: From violence to your mind and spirit, be healed.

ALL: Be healed.

LEADER: Holy Spirit of Original Blessing surrounds you, upholds you on all sides, flows round about you, caresses you, loves you, and wills you to be restored. Be restored, dear friend. We are here. We are with you.

This liturgy broke the silence of rape and invited the counselors and friends to be healers.

Francesca's liturgy: Blessing a healer

Francesca was invited to be on her church's

team that responds to violence against women. Her community blessed her and the team for this healing ministry.

LEADER ONE: Let us lay hands on N. and N. (Names of the team) and bless them for healing ministry.

N. and N., you are called to healing ministry for (Name your congregation).

LEADER TWO: Spirit of Healing,

Time and again throughout history

You call forth Your ministers from the community

And send them to do works of justice:

to heal the sick and broken,

to feed hungry souls,

to give drink to thirsty ones,

to free captives.

Come, Holy Wisdom, Healing Spirit, Regenerative Source,

Bless us, to do Your works of healing.

ALL: Give us Your Spirit.

LEADER THREE: We ask You to bless us, who, in the cry of the people and in the word of the community, are called to participate in healing. We ask You to pour out Your Spirit upon us, that we may have the gifts of health and healing, see visions, dream dreams, break bread, do justice.

ALL: Give us Your Spirit.

LEADER FOUR: Give Your Spirit, Holy Wisdom, to your people with whom we minister.

Give Your Spirit to women and men, boys and girls recovering from clergy or ministerial misconduct of a sexual nature, that they may stand up to the powers and principalities of the church, ask for what is rightfully theirs, and refuse to be silent or disappear.

Give Your Spirit to ministers, pastoral counselors, supervisors, seminary professors and church representatives who have sexually exploited the faithful that they may recognize the harm they have done, seek help and offer restitution.

Give Your Spirit to church decision-makers, bishops, cabinets, pastors, response teams and

others that they may walk with truth-tellers.

Give Your Spirit to the churches that the whole people of God may benefit from our work.

Give Your Spirit to families and friends, wives and children of perpetrators, congregations and communities that they may be offered loving care, understanding and support.

ALL: Give us Your Spirit.

LEADER FIVE: When the bread is not enough,

When our hope is dim,

When our energies are frazzled,

Refresh us with Your Spirit.

ALL: Give us Your Spirit.

This liturgy broke silence about violence against women in church communities and invited the church community to respond by blessing members for healing ministry.

These stories reveal the healing powers of liturgy. Women's healing liturgies can also empower change in church and society. They can give women, men and children courage to break the cycle of violence that exists in church and society. Like Suzanne's lament for clergy sexual abuse, they provide opportunities for healing. Women and church communities need to affirm and reclaim the power of collective healing. These liturgies are a beginning. ●

Diann L. Neu is co-founder and co-director of WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual) in Silver Spring, Md. She is a feminist liturgist and a licensed psychotherapist and spiritual director. This article is based on presentations made in December 2001 at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., and in July 2001 at a training in Colorado Springs, Colo., for "Teams Responding with Intervention and Healing Related to Clergy or Ministerial Misconduct of a Sexual Nature" sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of the United Methodist Church.

WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

Solidarity for the long haul

by Sunita Mehta

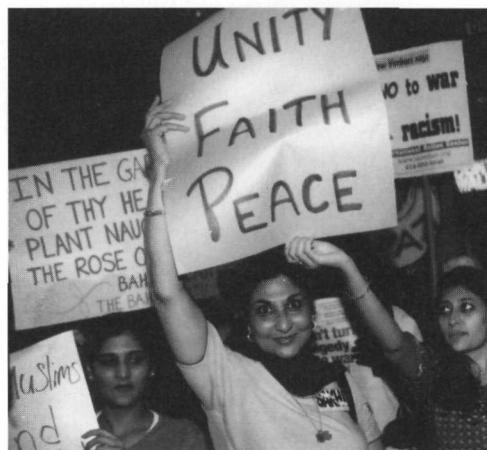
Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a women's collective in New York founded in April 2001, a full five months before the Twin Towers were razed to the ground. Fahima Danishgar and I co-founded WAW because we were both distressed by the oppression of Afghan women by the Taliban — and disturbed by the absence of Afghan community women in the world discourse upon this matter. Fahima is a 23-year-old Afghan activist and political scientist; and I am a 33-year-old women's rights and South Asian community activist.

On September 10, 2001, Fahima and I drove together to Falls Church, Va., to visit an organization working with Afghan asylum seekers. On the drive back, we talked about *jihad*. Fahima explained that she was brought up with the understanding that *jihad* is a very personal struggle, and certainly not a violent struggle. A Muslim must always expose and condemn evil, external and within oneself, never tolerate it: This is the core of *jihad* for my friend.

The next morning, when I saw the black cloud in the sky above my son's school in Brooklyn — and then the repeated TV images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center — Fahima's interpretation of *jihad* rang in my ears. If *jihad* was a personal and internal battle with one's demons, what was this? I have come to know many feminist Muslim women through this work who believe that women's rights are guaranteed under the *Qu'ran*. It seems that the Islam that these women embrace has also been hijacked.

I remember walking with my sister and cousin through Manhattan on that piercingly bright and desperate day — I had never been more acutely conscious of being an immigrant, a South Asian; and yet I had never felt more a New Yorker, an American. Terrorists

had intended to attack the ultimate symbol of America — only the victims of 9/11 hailed from all corners of the world, and were of every possible religion and class. It was instantaneously apparent that a bloody retaliation was inevitable against Afghanistan since Osama bin Laden was harbored there.



WAW co-sponsored the earliest Muslim peace rallies and teach-ins in New York. We advocated that every effort to address Afghan women's rights, in order to be effective, must be built upon a sincere acknowledgement that the vast majority of Afghan women are Muslim. We asked that the feminist debate shift beyond a fixation with the *burqa* or *chadori*. While we were tortured by the jingoism and war-mongering that pervaded the media, we could not adopt the unrealistic pacifism of the American peace movement. We knew the urgency of Afghanistan's liberation from terrorist rule, and asked how peace might come about without forceful intervention. We did not desire a unilateral invasion by the U.S., but rather by a global coalition under U.N. auspices, which would remain with Afghanistan until peace and economic stability were not a distant pipe dream.

The U.S. did retaliate: We dropped food and bombs on the innocent men, women and children of Afghanistan. In December 2001, WAW Board member Masuda Sultan went back to her place of birth, Kandahar, with a film crew. Masuda found 19 members of her extended family dead, killed by U.S. bombs. Despite her pain, she believes that an intervention was necessary for Afghanistan to be led by a government chosen by its people.

In January 2002, when the Interim Prime Minister Karzai spoke to the Afghan community at a public meeting in New York, we shared the community's hope, faith and optimism, laced with a chilling realization that the odds were steeply stacked against him.

The reality is a mixed bag. There are two women in the interim government, one the deputy to Karzai himself. We read that girls are beginning to attend school, women's magazines are being started, there is radio transmission for a few hours a day, and newspapers are being published. There is even an effort to ensure an Afghan presence at the 2004 Olympics. And yet, the Tourism Minister has been assassinated, brothels are proliferating, poverty has led some families to sell their children, and widows continue to beg on the streets. Security is the foremost concern: We hear of pervasive warlordism and rape.

Noeleen Heyzer, of UNIFEM, warns that gross women's rights violations are the surest sign of broader and more entrenched human rights abuses. UNICEF's Gulbadan Habibi asks the world to stay with Afghanistan for the long haul, since a country which has been destroyed by over two decades of war cannot be rebuilt overnight. These sentiments will guide WAW in the years to come.

Sunita Mehta is the Grants Director at the Sister Fund.

LIVING THROUGH PAIN

... to live beyond and whole

An interview with Carol Gallagher by Martin Brokenleg



Carol Gallagher, formerly a parish priest in the Diocese of Delaware, will become Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia early this month. A member of the Cherokee nation, Gallagher will be the first native woman in the worldwide Anglican Communion to serve as a bishop. In this interview with *Witness* contributing editor Martin Brokenleg, a Lakota priest and professor of Native American Studies at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D., Gallagher reflects on her experience in the church as a native woman — and on the alternative vision she will bring to her new role. Her commitment to work that fosters the honoring of family and community relationships comes, in part, out of deep personal knowledge of family and racial violence.

MARTIN BROKENLEG: Carol, I remember another native person, who is a bishop right now, who at one time asked me, “Should I leave my name in?” for nomination. And I said, “Well, God won’t say, ‘Yes’ if you take your name out and God will say, ‘No’ if he doesn’t want you there.” So, how were you nominated?

CAROL GALLAGHER: A colleague of mine, with whom I had served as a deputy to General Convention and on other committees, sent my name in. Southern Virginia is his home diocese, and it’s the home diocese of Delaware’s bishop, Wayne Wright.

I was a little bit hesitant — just the basic, “What, are you, crazy?” But one of the things that Gary said was that they were looking for somebody to be the pastoral bishop for the clergy. Working with clergy issues is one of the things that I had been doing in Delaware — the health and well-being of the clergy is primary to me. The other thing Southern Virginia wanted was someone to encourage small congregations, many of which are poor and the more ethnically diverse parishes in the diocese. I also have a lot of passion around that sort of work. So I said, “Well, okay.” Pretty reluctantly. But I thought it was a really

nice thing that my friend wanted to nominate me.

I made it through several of the hoops and hurdles and then went on what they were calling a walkabout — which all the rest of the church calls a dog and pony show. I came away saying, “Well, that was really nice that they included me, but it’s never going to happen!”

M.B.: What did you tell people? What did they want to know?

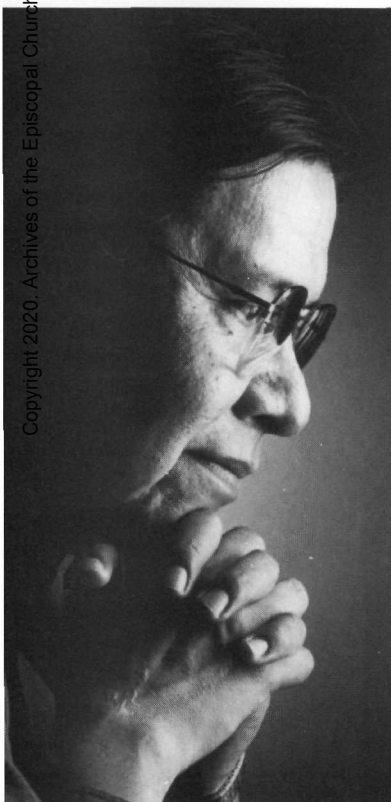
C.G.: Well, most people were concerned about the kinds of programs we’ve developed here in Delaware. Many were concerned about my family, about how they would respond to this and all those kinds of things. Many of them were questions I find that are fairly commonly asked of women clergy. “How do you balance your home life and being a mother?” and all that kind of stuff.

M.B.: Women are expected to do that, but men aren’t!

C.G.: It’s still so new for the church in many senses — particularly around positions of what would be perceived as authority. I guess people were really concerned that I would leave the church for my family or some such thing. When they came here and interviewed me, one of my parishioners was really clear with them. She said, “You know, she DOES put her family first! I mean if one of her children is sick, she’s going to stay with her children. But she would also encourage any of the rest of us to do that for our family, too. That’s just the way she lives her life.”

M.B.: Well, the only bishop I know who has resigned his episcopacy because of his family is Steven Charleston, a native person! Is that significant for us — for native people, that is? What’s that gift to the church?

C.G.: Well, I think that as native people we have an integrated awareness of how much we’re grounded in our family — and in our tribe and community — and that we really can’t go forward if there is over-



ALSO IS A PROMISE ...

whelming pain and distress. The family or tribe has to find a way to heal together. So would I walk away from being a bishop if I had to? I wouldn't think twice about it! You know, my family will always be my priority. That's a gift that we as native people can bring to the church and to the rest of the world.

M.B.: Well, in Lakota culture women are more important than men and that's the reason that women are in charge of home and family and children. That stuns my mostly Norwegian Lutheran students! They're stunned to think that that's such an important thing, and that that's why we put the women in charge of it.

C.G.: Right! I was in Oklahoma — in Tahlequah — the weekend before Christmas.

M.B.: Cherokee center-of-the-universe!

C.G.: Really! Lois Neal, who just recently retired from the Methodist Church, and Chad Smith, the principal chief, were talking about matrilineal cultures and he said, "I may be principal chief, but we all know who's in charge!" So there's an importance to the role that the rest of the world would call "women's work." Those things have a different honor than in the mainstream culture. Lakotas and Cherokees would not say that the roles are the same, but there is that commonality of the importance of that role.

M.B.: Well, in our mythology, our revealer, our savior, our messiah is the White Buffalo Calf Woman! What do you imagine that kind of a psyche about women is going to bring into the church as a whole? To the House of Bishops, I mean. You're going to be a revelation to the House of Bishops!

C.G.: Well, maybe I'll have the opportunity to ask why things are done a certain way, or point out assumptions that are being made —

about roles and who people are and those kinds of things — where other people might not even see that assumptions are being made.

I also hope I can bring into the House of Bishops the sense of really honoring families. I mean honoring whatever that means where people are, honoring how we're related so intimately. I'm hoping that that will be helpful to the process of real dialogue.

M.B.: You speak of going home to Tahlequah. What is this Cherokee business in your life and your identity?

C.G.: There was a time in my life when I wanted it to just be a little place of visitation as opposed to going "home," but it's become sort of the major stream, the major artery of my life. I got a call from Willa Mankiller after Thanksgiving and she said, "We're having a service and we want you to come and speak. We want to do it before Christmas because I really think the Cherokee people need it before Christmas." And folks said to me, "Well, you're crazy. You've got all that work to do at the parish." And I said, "You don't say no to Willa Mankiller!"

M.B.: She was principal chief of the Cherokee nation for how long?

C.G.: Nine years, I think. So I went and spoke and they honored me afterward. My mother and I went out together. The service was incredibly powerful. The Cherokee Nation Children's Choir sang and several pastors spoke about healing and reconciliation and hope. One of the things I spoke about was how my mother had to leave Oklahoma when she was 11 years old, because of family violence and alcoholism. She was put on a bus with her name pinned to her dress at 11! In many senses it saved her life, but it also was in some senses a place

of no return for her. Her mother and brothers and sisters joined her within a short period of time. But her childhood then became a difficult historical period that she just didn't look back on at all, because it was too painful. At the service in Tahlequah, when my mother heard the children singing Christmas carols in Cherokee, she realized she knew every word. She said, "You know, somebody sang these to me when I was a tiny child. And I was able to sing along."

So for me, being a Cherokee is being able to more than just survive, but understand that living through pain also is a promise to live beyond and whole. We're always seeking that in our traditions.

M.B.: Non-native people in the church often ask, if not straight out, somehow implicitly, "Can you be Christian and be native?" My answer is that for me all of my spiritual and cultural tradition is my Old Testament. God would never have lied to my grandfather, a medicine man born in 1854 — the first Brokenleg. And so, all the imagery, all the hopes that God put in the heart of my grandfather were not lies. They were what my grandfather understood to be the nature of God.

And so, in my generation, I would say that if God was powerful then, God can be powerful now. The ceremonies and tradition of my own people are the vehicle God has given to us — like God gave Leviticus to the people of Israel to codify their worship. But we have our own customs and as long as I'm grounded based on that tradition — on my own Lakota tradition — I can understand what Jesus means when he says I have to be a "good relative" to the people who are mine, because the most common phrase in Lakota worship is, "You are all my relatives." And it doesn't just mean human relatives. It means

plants, animals, spirit beings, everything. Everything is my relative.

I suppose for the Cherokee, it's probably much the same?

C.G.: It is. And it is important to note that there was a point in history when this question was not without economic or survival value. Federal government policy was about extermination and removal. Lots of kids that went to boarding school had to be Christians. If you practiced your tradition, you weren't welcome in the church. But there were economic incentives for those children to go to boarding school. It wasn't like parents had many choices. In the case of my people, they have been Christian for many generations. My great-great grandmother who walked the Trail of Tears in the 1830s was singing hymns, in Cherokee, with a little hymnal in her hand.

There have been a lot of politics between traditionalists and the church, but a lot of it had to do with the way Christianity was imposed upon us. In my generation we've been encouraged to incorporate our Old Testament and New Testaments. We've learned that we cannot thrive without a grounded identity in who we are, which includes our antiquity and the on-going traditions as well as being Christians. If we turn around and just discard all the stuff that's in the history or in the tradition, then we discard a huge part of ourselves.

I also don't think that God told our people lies. Each tribe, I think, interpreted their tradition and their experience of God in their unique way. So many of our stories tell us about our relationship with one another and with the Creator. And how we are to be to one another and why we are the way we are, and those kinds of things. That's also true of Jewish tradition and its teachings about a way of life so that people remain healthy and faithful.

We take an oath when we are ordained that we believe the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to our salvation. And I fully believe that, but that's about salvation as opposed to my personal identity. I'm not separating those two. I don't discount the Old Testament as it appears in Scripture. I think some of the most powerful stories in the

world are contained in the Old Testament. I do think that there are powerful stories that companion with them that are essential for my understanding of myself, but also for our place in the world in North America.

M.B.: Let me push you one notch further. Unless Anglicanism can be completely incorporated into the theological world of Native American people, will it always be foreign to North America?

C.G.: I think so. Integration is the ultimate challenge because Anglicanism will always remain sort of a British thing, foreign, unless we native people are willing to integrate it forward.

M.B.: I'm right in line with you. But I would say that the Old Testament in our published Bibles — and that was a political decision also — is the history of God's relationship with those people. But it doesn't mean that God hasn't talked to my people at the beginning of the world until now.

C.G.: Exactly.

M.B.: I know you've been a part of the conversations about justice for native people in the church — that whole Pan Pacific conversation involving native people from Canada, the U.S., Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia.

C.G.: Yes. I guess there's been an in-breaking of justice, a breaking through. It hasn't been something that's been legislated as much as it's been brought about by people being willing to be vehicles or advocates or stand in the in-between times, because not always has the church been emotionally or politically or in any other way ready to welcome difference. Or welcome the people who have already been in the church.

What happened with my election in Southern Virginia was that God moved for something different and the people understood that. I wouldn't say my election is about justice as much as it is about people turning toward a way of being that embraces a just understanding of life in the church. And a healthy understanding of life in the church.

I also think that part of what happened in Southern Virginia had to do with the fact that I had been there in 1997, playing a prominent

role in organizing a service of remembrance and reconciliation at Jamestown in preparation for the 400th anniversary of the first settlement at Jamestown, which signifies the first missionary thrust of the Anglican Church outside Britain. A new covenant between the church and native people was signed as part of the occasion. We worked hard to include the local native people in that diocese along with other folks from the diocese. And so it was a big cross-section of people who were there. And there were people from all over the country, from Canada and Hawaii and from some far-flung places, too. It was a moment of people recognizing that there were other ways to do ministry in native communities — instead of ministry to native communities, ministry with native communities and raising up leadership from native communities. My commitment to raising up leadership from all communities was made very clear at that event. Finding ways to help people, or at least non-traditional folks, get a place in the church is what I've been committed to doing all along.

M.B.: I have a friend who lives in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, who I think would define herself as kind of on the fringe. And she said, "I was certain Carol Gallagher would never be elected, because I liked her!"

C.G.: Well, yeah, that's what everybody said.

M.B.: So what does that tell you about the grace of God?

C.G.: Complete and pervasive.

M.B.: One of the divisive issues in the Episcopal Church today is same-sex orientation and what to do about all of that. But you and I both come from a native tradition in which homosexual relationships are sanctified. Among us Lakota most of our medicine men are gay men. Most of our medicine women are lesbians. How do you see that aspect of what you bring into the episcopate influencing the rest of the church?

C.G.: When I was getting ready to leave my parish, a gay couple came up to me and said, "One of the things we want to thank you for is never making us feel any different. You accepted us from the moment you got here." One of the ideas that I've been brought up

with is that difference — whether it is sexual orientation or artistic talent — is a gift as opposed to a threat. That's where we should be as a church.

In Delaware, the bishop gave approval for same-sex blessings last fall and he caught a lot of flak from outside the diocese for doing so. But very little flak from his own diocese. We had decided to examine the issue as a community long before Wayne Wright was even elected bishop. By the time he had come on board, council had already voted to approve blessings. The community really worked through this together. No voice was left out and there was an ongoing conversation for the past six or seven years. The opinion of the people was, "It's the right thing to do."

Now, saying that, that is not the case in the diocese where I will serve as suffragan bishop.

M.B.: So how is that going to mesh?

C.G.: Well, I consider my job to be one of education. I don't think it's one of confrontation, because I've never known that to work well. There are some diverse and accepting communities in the diocese and some very non-accepting, but I think Southern Virginia is not unlike most dioceses that I've been in. I don't have the authority to set that kind of policy, but I can be an instrument of justice and reconciliation.

M.B.: What's coming down the interstate at us as issues for the church?

C.G.: At some point as a church we're going to have to deal with our environmental issues very seriously. I was talking to somebody the other day about oil and drilling in the Arctic and places like that. You know, that little bit of oil is not the problem. We need to look at how we use and abuse money and at the huge disparity between poverty and wealth that we have in this country. And there's got to be a better way of bringing justice to other places, places where every waking moment is a terror all the time.

So I hope the church is willing to take on its own sense of need to have pretty things as opposed to having a healthy world. ●

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Fast track to disaster for the world's poor

by Thomas E. Ambrogi



As this issue of *The Witness* went to press, it seemed certain that the U.S. Congress would approve legislation giving President Bush “fast track” authority to negotiate new trade agreements without any meaningful congressional oversight. Labor leaders, human rights activists and environmentalists recognize that Fast Track is crucial to the fate of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) a bill that will be introduced in the Congress in the near future. The only way the bill can pass will be if the House and Senate abdicate their constitutional right to debate and amend trade legislation and rush it through by “fast track” presidential authority.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) will be a disaster for the poor of the 34 countries of this hemisphere. It is crucial to understand the roots and the context of this bill as it arrives under the urgent pressure of Fast Track.

‘NAFTA on steroids’

FTAA is a trade and investment pact first envisioned in 1994, at the Summit of the Americas in Miami, by the 34 nations of Canada, U.S., Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean (except Cuba). With a population of 800 million from Anchorage to Tierra del Fuego, and a combined GDP of \$11 trillion, it would be the largest free trade zone in the world. Intended for completion by 2005, there is some pressure, especially from the U.S. and Chile, for ratification by 2003.

FTAA is based on models from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 and the World Trade Organization (WTO), but it goes far beyond each of these in both scope and power. One observer has remarked that “FTAA is NAFTA on steroids.” It incorporates from the WTO the General Agreement on Trade in Services, and contains all the powers of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which was roundly rejected due to a concerted public outcry in 1998. It also expands on the Structural Adjustment Programs which have been imposed in recent years on most countries of the region by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and which are in part responsible for so much of the crushing debt weighing down less developed nations. The principles of the FTAA represent the apex of the economic and political globalization process. There has been a massive restructuring of the global economy in favor of transnational corporations (TNCs) over the past three decades. Between 1970 and 1998, the number of TNCs increased by 800 percent. Of the top 100 economies in the world, 51 are now corporations and 49 are countries. Seventy percent of global trade is controlled by just 500 corporations. As with the WTO and NAFTA, the FTAA agreement will contain very few safeguards to protect workers and human rights, or health and environmental standards.

For the first time in any international trade agreement, transnational corporations will gain competitive rights to a full range of government service provisions. They will also have the right to sue for financial compensation from any government that resists, since publicly-funded services are considered “monopolies” in the new world of international trade. Services are the fastest growing sector in international trade, and of all services, health, education and water are potentially the most lucrative. Already over 40 countries, including all of Europe, have opened up their public education sectors to foreign-based corporate competition, and almost 100 countries have done the same in the health care sector. FTAA also significantly expands the investment chapter of NAFTA, the infamous Chapter 11, which many analysts have called “the very heart and soul of NAFTA.” The exclusive focus of the FTAA mandate on investment is on the protection of foreign investors. Thus, the key question is whether FTAA will force governments to give up their sovereign power to regulate in the public interest.

NAFTA was the first international trade agreement to allow a private interest, usually a corporation or an industry sector, to bypass its own government and, although it is not a signatory to the

agreement, directly challenge another NAFTA government if its laws, policies and practices impinge on the actual and potential profits of the corporation. Chapter 11 gives the right to sue for compensation for lost income, regardless of the legality of government actions. It incorporates the remarkable principle that a government cannot implement legislation that “expropriates” a company’s future profits.

Corporations suing governments

A panel of trade bureaucrats can override a government’s domestic legislation or force a government to pay substantial compensation if they continue to enforce it. To adjudicate all disputes, NAFTA’s Chapter 11 sets up secretive “tribunals” at the World Bank or United Nations, made up of three persons named by the parties in dispute. These hearings are never open to the public, offering the confidentiality which corporate investors consider essential. NAFTA panels are not bound by the rulings of previous panels. No one knows for sure how many cases have been brought to NAFTA tribunals, or their outcome, since the whole process is highly confidential. But there are a few cases for which there is some reliable public information.

The first Chapter 11 case, brought before a NAFTA tribunal at the UN, was one in which the U.S.-based Ethyl Corporation sued the Canadian government for \$251 million in damages over its ban of Ethyl’s gasoline additive MMT, which Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien once called a “dangerous neurotoxin.” Canada settled the case in 1998, agreeing to lift the ban, allow the additive, and pay \$13 million in damages to Ethyl.

A case that is pending involves Sun Belt Water of Santa Barbara, which is suing the Canadian government for \$10.5 billion in damages. Sun Belt’s claim revolves around British Columbia banning the export of its bulk water in 1993, thus preventing Sun Belt from getting into the water business there.

Public service providers are watching another case that involves the United Parcel Service, which is suing Canada for \$160 million in damages. UPS claims that government subsidies of the Canadian postal service represent an unfair trade advantage against UPS. Another important case still pending, the largest brought in the U.S., has the potential for creating a significant backlash against these outlandish suits. It is that of Methanex, a Canadian corporation which is the world’s largest producer of methanol, a key ingredient in the gasoline additive MTBE. In 1999, California banned MTBE, after studies at the University of California at Davis warned that it may cause cancer in humans. Methanex claims that California’s action is a “confiscation” of its property, what Chapter 11 calls “tantamount to expropriation.” Though its quarrel is with a state law, Methanex sued the U.S. government for \$970 million, and if a NAFTA tribunal at the UN finds this a “regulatory taking,” the U.S. government can

be held liable for the corporation’s lost profits.

Local government fighting back

But local government is starting to fight back at this erosion of people’s right to know and determine how multinational corporations are litigating against their interests and safety. The Methanex case galvanized California’s new Select Committee on International Policy and State Legislation, chaired by State Senator Sheila Kuehl, to make sure FTAA will not get by without intense public scrutiny. Following the lead of the Kuehl Committee, legislatures throughout the Americas could begin to open secret trade negotiations to public examination to make them more responsive to the concerns of civil society.

Because so much of NAFTA’s workings still operate in corporate seclusion, it is difficult to get a reliable evaluation of its track record since it began in 1994. But Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch has recently released a lengthy and well-documented report entitled, “Down on the Farm: NAFTA’s Seven Years War on Farmers and Ranchers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.” The report shows how independent farmers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico have seen agricultural prices plummet, farm incomes collapse and agricultural subsidy programs dismantled. For example, the Canadian government has slashed farm subsidies and farm income support, so that farm incomes in Canada have declined while farm debts have risen sharply. Canadian farm bankruptcies and delinquent loans are five times greater than they were before NAFTA. Dropping prices meant that farmers’ net incomes in Canada declined 19 percent between 1989 and 1999, although Canadian agricultural exports doubled during the same period. The report’s conclusion is that NAFTA’s twin policies of free trade and elimination of domestic farm protections have handed the entire food production and distribution system over to giant agribusinesses, which have reaped huge profits while the majority of farmers and consumers have been major losers.

The negative outcomes of seven years of NAFTA have helped define the growing national debate over President Bush’s urgent demand that Congress give him “Fast Track” power, quite obviously for immediate use as soon as the FTAA draft agreements are ready. The U. S. Constitution gives Congress exclusive authority “to regulate Commerce with Foreign Nations” (Art. I-8). “Fast Track” is a mechanism established in 1974, and used only five times since, that delegates to the Executive Branch what is constitutionally congressional authority for setting trade terms. It suspends normal congressional rules, and leaves Congress with 60 days to act, limits debate to a maximum of 20 hours in each chamber of Congress, and allows no amendments to be attached to the legislation.

Fast Track power expired in 1994, after it had been used by President Clinton the previous year for passage of NAFTA. Clinton’s

continued on page 30

requests that Congress again delegate its trade authority in 1997 and 1998 were refused by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. The Bush Administration has now renamed it "trade promotion authority." Representative Phil Crane (R-IL) originally introduced the Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2001, which was amended as HR 3005 and passed December 6. Two weeks later, the Senate Finance Committee approved the Baucus/Grassley Trade Promotion Act which, at this writing, has yet to be brought to the Senate floor.

Presidential Fast Track authority is crucial to the fate of FTAA, just as it was to NAFTA. It is simply astounding that the 20 hours of debate over NAFTA in the House and Senate in 1993 does not contain a single reference to Chapter 11, its most contentious provision. The debate, such as it was, was simply a rhetorical public relations battle, in which the two sides were largely cast as defenders or enemies of "free trade." Not surprisingly, NAFTA's advocates emerged as the clear winners on all counts. After all, who could oppose the abolition of barriers to free trade?

But NAFTA's Chapter 11 was never about trade at all. It was about the curbing the sovereign power of governments, elected by the people, to regulate in the public interest when faced with massive and rapacious corporate power. And this will be the central issue of FTAA, magnified many times through the entire hemisphere. For all who care about economic and social justice for the whole human family, the struggle over FTAA will be the defining political issue of the coming several years. ●

Thomas E. Ambrogi is an interfaith theologian and human rights advocate. He is a member of All Saints Church, Pasadena. A more detailed version of this story is available in the "A Globe of Witnesses" section of *The Witness*' web site, <www.thewitness.org/agw>. Ambrogi can be reached at <Tambrogi@aol.com>.

The face of evil?

The implication of the "good vs. evil" rhetoric used by President Bush to characterize the war on terrorism "is a sort of insight and ultimate judgment that most Christians are a little uncomfortable with," said James Dunn, a professor of Christianity and public policy at Wake Forest University (*Christian Science Monitor*, 2/6/02). "When that sort of ultimate certainty comes along, you have the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Puritan hangings.

"The great divide is economic, educational, medical — all those things that separate the haves from the have-nots," said Dunn, who is also concerned about the implications for separation of church and state in the president's language.

Food with strings attached

Anuradha Mittal, codirector of the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First), used the recent experience of her native India to explain the problem with "food aid" in an interview with *The Sun* (2/02):

"Of the 830 million hungry people worldwide, a third of them live in India. Yet in 1999, the Indian government had 10 million tons of surplus food grains: rice, wheat and so on. In the year 2000, that surplus increased to almost 60 million tons — most of it left in the granaries to rot. Instead of giving the surplus food to the hungry, the Indian government was hoping to export the grain to make money. It also stopped buying grain from its own farmers, leaving them destitute. The farmers, who had gone into debt to purchase expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides on the advice of the government, were now forced to burn their crops in their fields.

"At the same time, the government of India was buying grain from Cargill and other American corporations, because the aid India receives from the World Bank stipulates that the government must do so. This means that today India is the largest importer of the same grain it exports. It doesn't make sense — eco-

nomie or otherwise.

"This situation is not unique to India. In 1985, Indonesia received the gold medal from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for achieving food self-sufficiency. Yet by 1998, it had become the largest recipient of food aid in the world. I participated in a fact-finding mission to investigate Indonesia's reversal of fortune. Had the rains stopped? Were there no more crops in Indonesia? No, the cause of the food insecurity was the Asian financial crisis. Banks and industries were closing down. In the capital of Jakarta alone, fifteen thousand people lost their jobs in just one day. Then, as I traveled to rural areas, I saw rice plants dancing in field after field, and I saw casava and all kinds of fruits. There was no shortage of food, but the people were too poor to buy it. So what did the U.S. and other countries, like Australia, do? Smelling an opportunity to unload their own surplus wheat in the name of 'food aid,' they gave loans to Indonesia upon the condition that it buy wheat from them. And Indonesians don't even eat wheat."

Feminist economics

Feminist economists and global women's organizations have undergone an evolution in their approach to economic policy, Maria Riley explained in a recent Center of Concern newsletter (*Center Focus*, 6/01). She identifies four stages:

1) WID (Women in Development) focused on integrating women into the economic development process through measures such as credit availability, land reform, training and education.

2) GAD (Gender and Development) recognized gender — "the social roles, expectations and responsibilities assigned to women and men because of their biological differences" — as a way to understand how political, economic and social policies impact women and men differently. GAD, for instance, looks at the way IMF and World Bank policies cause cutbacks in public sector services, shifting the burden of social responsibilities onto the household, the



"I'M SORRY, MR. LARABEE SAYS HE WON'T NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS."

realm of women's unpaid labor.

3) A call, based on GAD analysis, for "mainstreaming gender in all policies and programs" — demanding a voice in all areas of economic policy-making, not only in so-called "women's economic issues." Riley says this is a formidable task because "trade economists and negotiators consider trade and investment gender-neutral, and because the major NGO groups addressing trade and investment issues, such as organized labor, environmental groups and many Southern NGOs [non-governmental organizations], generally do not have a gender analysis."

4) An emphasis on empowerment and human rights, which would put social policies at the center of economic policies, so that "the soundness of economic policies would not be based on market criteria, per se, but in terms of whether they ultimately succeed in bringing societies to achieving social justice."

"Visitability" victories

Naperville, Ill., and Pima County, Ariz., became the first two municipalities in the nation to require wheelchair-accessible fea-

tures in new private homes, *The New York Times* reported in February (2/07/02).

Naperville passed an ordinance Feb. 6 requiring that new homes be built with 32-inch-wide ground-floor doorways, wood blocking behind bathroom walls capable of supporting grab bars, and the placement of electrical outlets and light switches at heights reachable from a wheelchair. Along with these measures, Pima County also mandated that new homes be built with at least one wheelchair-accessible entrance.

"The votes are a victory for the 15-year-old 'visitability' movement, which wants provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act that now apply to public places and apartment buildings to be extended to private homes as well," the *Times* explained. "The goal of the movement is to ensure that disabled people can freely visit their neighbors."

"The issue has led to battles pitting minority rights against property rights, as home builders and others resist universal mandates that benefit only a small part of the population."

Proponents of the change argue that the larger community, and not just the individual,

has an interest in the way homes are constructed.

"When someone builds a home, they're not just building it for themselves — that home's going to be around for 100 years," said Eleanor Smith, a teacher from Decatur, Ga., whose organization, Concrete Change, has lobbied for visitability legislation around the country. ...

"One man said the regulations were a matter as much of safety as of convenience, particularly in case of fire. A city councilman recalled the difficulty he had helping his wife, who needed a wheelchair temporarily, into the bathroom. Another man who uses a wheelchair pointed out that 'everyone is one accident from being in this chair.'" ●

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The Witness

The Witness Magazine

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